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August 16, 2012

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Mental Health Services Act Funds Help Provide Housing for Chronically Homeless in New Program

(Sacramento) - A new Los Angeles County effort announced today to provide permanent housing for more than 1,000 chronically homeless individuals is benefiting from funding provided under the Mental Health Services Act created through Proposition 63. The initiative, passed by California voters in 2004, was authored by Senate President pro Tempore Darrell Steinberg.

The "Home for Good Funding Collaborative" in Los Angeles is announcing a commitment of more than \$105 million in private donations and public resources to provide permanent supportive housing for veterans, other individuals, families and children, as reported in the [Los Angeles Times](#). Business, foundation and other private donations are leveraging public funds with those combined resources "carefully focused on the greatest need, moving chronically homeless people from streets to homes," according to the [Home for Good task force](#).

Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) funding will be leveraged to create some of that housing. The Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health (DMH) will receive 250 Homeless Section 8 vouchers over a two year period, which are only made possible by DMH providing mental health services and supports to help clients successfully obtain and maintain the housing. Most, if not all of the clients accessing these vouchers will be in programs funded through MHSA.

"This is another example of the great work being done with the money provided by Proposition 63. More so, it shows how counties are creatively using the funds to expand their resources to meet the specific needs of their communities," said Steinberg (D-Sacramento). "The Mental Health Services Act is helping to bring life-changing benefits to tens of thousands of people all over California. In this Los Angeles program and elsewhere, those mental health services are also bringing enormous savings in other public expenses by reducing the costs related to hospitalization, jail and temporary homeless shelters."

For the additional 250 housing units, LA County DMH estimates approximately \$2.5 million in MHSA funds will leverage \$2.325 million in Homeless Section 8 vouchers for at least two years. Some clients will receive services through Full Service Partnerships, some through other MHSA programs, and others will be served through a new innovative MHSA program, the "Integrated Mobile Health Team." In this program, mental health, physical health and substance abuse professionals work as one team providing integrated care to the most vulnerable individuals who are homeless and mentally ill. The goal of the program is to improve clients' mental and physical health, and to help them successfully transition from homelessness into permanent supportive housing.

Statewide, MHSA dollars are funding housing for the homeless mentally ill in a variety of ways. Nearly 2,500 permanent supportive housing units are being created through \$400 million of MHSA funds set-aside for that purpose. To date, 1,374 units are complete with another 545 in the pipeline. There are \$92 million remaining for upcoming housing projects.

However, as is the case with the Los Angeles "Home for Good" program, MHSA funds are also leveraging much more housing for the homeless mentally ill. Not including the 250 new housing vouchers under this Home for Good Funding Collaborative, LA County has used MHSA funds to leverage federal housing grants to provide 1,134 units for the homeless mentally ill, with another 791 housing units created through the MHSA dedicated housing fund. In Sacramento County, MHSA dedicated housing funds have created 123 units; the county has another 497 units of housing for the homeless mentally ill through leveraging MHSA monies with other funds.

Please find more information on services provided through MHSA [here](#) on the Pro Tem's website.

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